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OLC 69-0419

19 May 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Senator William Proxmire (D., Wis.)

1. In connection with your meeting with Senator Proxmire at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 May, I am attaching for your background use a biographic sketch on the Senator and a list of the members of the full Joint Economic Committee as well as the Subcommittee on Economy in Government to which he refers in his letter of 12 May to you. I am also including an excerpt from the Committee Resolution which outlines its charter.

2. Several points may be worthy of note:

a. The only appearance by a Director of Central Intelligence in an open session of any congressional committee was made by Allen Dulles in 1960, when he was the lead witness in Joint Economic Committee hearings on the U.S. and Soviet economies.

b. The Agency has assisted the Committee over the years in providing economic studies and papers which have been included in numerous Committee publications.

c. The Joint Economic Committee under Proxmire's chairmanship has been looking into government programs of major monetary importance.

d. As indicated in his letter to you, the Senator is very much concerned with national economic priorities. This stems largely from his concern over the present tax structure and the tremendous pressure which he and other members of Congress are receiving on this subject.

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e. Senator Proxmire is known as somewhat of a maverick; he is concerned about his public image particularly in view of the fact that he will be up for reelection in 1971; he has very few close personal friends and few people appear to take him into their confidence.

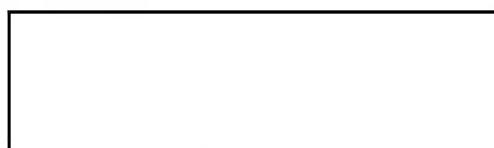
f. There is speculation that Proxmire may be opposed in the next election by Melvin Laird. Proxmire obviously is aware of this and is looking for campaign issues involving the Defense establishment. He feels that the Pentagon has not been truthful with him in his C5A inquiry and it appears that he intends to press this point.

g. It is clear that Proxmire would like to point out what he considers to be the endless escalation of defense expenditures in the Soviet Union as well as in the U.S. in order to somehow bring an end to what he feels is a disastrous course. His feelings in this regard appear to be very similar to those of Senator Symington.

3. It would seem that there is little to be gained by briefing the Joint Economic Committee in executive session and there is the distinct possibility of your becoming embroiled in a running battle between Senator Proxmire and the Department of Defense if you do. Bill Woodruff and others consider the Senator a reasonable individual, except in the areas mentioned, and he may be willing to drop his request when you discuss the situation with him.

4. You may want to take this opportunity to point out the problems created by public speculation on the size of the Agency's budget, using the Senator's recent encounter with this situation on the Today Show as an example.

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Deputy Legislative Counsel

Attachment

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